643 country As in all modern Governments, they are always
645 changing, and their efforts are nullified by their successors. Nevertheless, since government is extremely centralised, their signatures are needed for the merest details, which accounts for a great deal of delay. As they know the state of affairs only from official reports, their decisions in matters concerning the fellaheen are often either unsuitable or inopportune.

647 The authorities whose business it is to apply these de-
692 cisions are legion. The transmission and execution of laws, orders, decrees, bye-laws and the like is carried out by an army of officials 200,000 strong, who for so doing absorb a third of the revenue of the State, a sum almost equal to what is furnished by the labours of the fellaheen.

647 This is no chance comparison of the author's. 'The
511 long continuance of the bureaucratic system,' said Makram
661 Ebeid Pasha, Minister of Finance, in presenting the budget for 1936 to Parliament, 'has been the chief cause of the lasting poverty of the fellah, in spite of the progress and prosperity of the country.' He proposed, in his own words, to 'put an end to this shameful state of affairs, which has turned the people into mere servants of a government machine which was intended to serve them.'

647 The overpowering weight of this machine is concentrated, for the fellah, in the hands of his *mudîr*, his *maamûr*, and his *omda*. Let us examine the scope and function of these different officials.

635 Politically, Egypt is divided into 23 sections. There are five urban areas, called governorates (*mohâfazat*). These are: Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Suez and the Canal Area. There are four frontier-districts: the Red Sea, Sinai, the Western Desert (including the Oases of Siwa, Bahariya and Farafra) and the Southern Desert (including the Oases of Dakhla and Kharga). Last, but not least, there are 14 agricultural provinces, called mudiriyas, which cover the rest of the country.

Six of these—Beheira, Gharbiya, Dakahliya, Sharqiya, Menoufiya and Qalioubiya—each with 300,000 to 900,000 inhabitants, spread like a fan over the Delta. These six, whose names date from the Arab Period, are the most populous and best irrigated.

In Upper Egypt, strung out along the Nile Valley, are 635 ●
eight more provinces, named with one exception after their chief towns (*bandare*). These are, from north to south, Giza, Beni-Suef, Fayûm, Minia, Assiut, Girga, Qena and Aswan.

At the head of each province, called *mudiriya*, is a high official called the *mudîr*. His authority comes directly from the Ministry of the Interior, and he is frequently transferred. If he distinguishes himself he is brought nearer the capital, or even becomes a minister. On the other hand, if he falls out of favour he may be sent further south. He settles as the Government's representative in the more or less important but never very attractive town which is the capital of his *mudiriya*. As he is naturally more in touch with great men than with small, he has no direct knowledge of the fellaheen, who moreover cannot come into direct contact with him. They hear him spoken of, pay the taxes due to him, and catch a glimpse of him when an official visit brings him to their village. They think of him as being of a higher race than themselves, and revere him as a kind of demi-god. To them he seems all-powerful.

Outside the chief town the Mudeer's authority is exer- 634
cised by Maamûrs. Each *mudiriya* is divided into *markaz* or 625
police districts, from three to seven in number, except for Gharbiya, the most densely populated, which has twelve. The *maamûr*, a kind of chief constable, controls a police force distributed among the principal villages of his *markaz*. He is an executive officer enjoying very wide powers. The fellah thinks them unlimited, and has a corresponding respect for the man who exercises them.

The Maamûr is the fellah's king. The story is told of a fellah who said to the Khedive 'Abbas, in all good faith: 'God save you, and make you our *maamûr*.'

Yet even the *maamûr* does not know the fellaheen, their affairs, or their families, except through the *omda*. And the limited knowledge which the fellah has of politics or administration — citizen and voter though he be — comes to him through his *omda*, who for him is the sum of the law.

Each of the 4,000 villages of Egypt is governed by an 622
omda or mayor. He is nominated from among the leading inhabitants of the village which he rules and of which he often owns a part. Indeed he cannot be a candidate for